



Improving Rural Education in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry

ISSUED: February 5th, 2021

CLOSING DATE AND TIME: Friday, February 26th, 2021 @ 1:00 p.m.

CLOSING LOCATION: United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry
26 Pitt Street, Suite 323
Cornwall, On, K6J 3P2

Part A: Scope of Work

Project Summary

The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry ('SDG' or the 'County') is seeking Proposals from qualified Consultants to **develop a report quantifying/qualifying the main barriers to the maintenance of community schools within our region, and to propose solutions for overcoming those barriers.** There is a substantial body of literature confirming why educating children in or near their home communities is important, particularly from a social capital point of view. The intent of this report is therefore not to confirm what we already know, but rather to propose tangible policy solutions to make rural education in our region better.

Completing the report will require research as well as communication/consultation with local school boards, the province through the Ministry of Education, as well as stakeholders including parents, local municipalities and advocacy groups. **The document produced by the successful Consultant will be used by County officials as a tool to widely advocate for improvements in the education system in our region.**

Background/Project Description

The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry is the easternmost County in Ontario, comprised of 6 local municipalities stretching from the Quebec border in the east to Iroquois in the west, and from the City of Ottawa in the north to the United States border in the south. Our upper-tier municipality is home to about 66,000 residents and is served by 4 publicly funded school boards – English public, English separate, French public, and French separate.

The existence of 4 school boards within our geographic area is a dynamic that has a significant impact on where children from our region are educated. **The successful Consultant must therefore consider this dynamic as part of their review however these school boards legally exist, and Consultants should develop their recommendations within the 4-board context.**

As part of the development of a new Strategic Plan in late 2019, County Council determined that the current educational model within our region is inefficient and does not generally serve our children well, taking many of them out of their home communities. The impacts (loss of social capital, negative economic impacts to rural communities, etc.) are well documented. To that end, Council determined that **"Rural Schools – Educating Children in Their Communities"** would be one of its 4 Strategic Priorities:

While education is not within the purview of municipal government in Ontario, Council believes that the County and its constituent local municipalities have a significant and vital role to play in ensuring that our children are educated as close to home as possible. School closures not only have devastating impacts on children, but entire communities. Further, schools are the backbone of many of our communities. Smaller, rural schools provide a safe, welcoming place in which to educate children.

The County is committed to working with the province, local school boards, parents, and other stakeholders to develop strategies that maintain the vibrancy of our rural schools. Council

believes that all school boards must work together and collaborate with other stakeholder groups including municipalities, to develop local solutions and best practices that maximize local educational opportunities for our children.

It is essential that all Proposals submitted **clearly demonstrate** knowledge of/experience with:

- Literature concerning rural education issues, not only in Ontario but nationally and internationally – lessons learned, and models/strategies developed in other jurisdictions that could be adapted and/or replicated in our region.
- Current or past initiatives of the province of Ontario specific to rural education.
- The multitude of players involved in the delivery of education in Ontario, including the province through the Ministry of Education, local school boards, children, parents, and advocacy groups such as the Community Schools Alliance. It will be critical that the successful Consultant can access the right individuals to obtain the necessary information/data that will be required to successfully complete this assignment.
- Working knowledge of Ontario's significant education policies/procedures including, but not necessarily limited to:
 - Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines (PARG)
 - Shared space approaches and policies, both with coterminous boards and external user groups
 - Provincial and local board transportation policies and funding models
 - Funding models applicable to different school boards (e.g., English vs. French boards)
 - Other significant policies that impact rural education in SDG
- Experience with similar projects in the education sector, particularly Ontario.

In the context of education in the SDG region, **the following have been identified as challenges/issues.** Research will be required to quantify/qualify these issues to aid in the development of solutions. The list below is expansive and is provided for context only, as some are more significant than others.

- Slow population growth
- Low population density throughout the region
- Large school boards encompassing most of Eastern Ontario
- Four school boards competing for students
- Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines (PARG) incompatible with rural Ontario realities
- Shifting school boundaries, facilitating growth in some schools while 'choking off' others
- Inequitable per pupil funding formulas that create disparities among/between boards/schools
- Inequitable distribution of programming among schools (e.g., French immersion programs, available sports programming, etc.)
- Inequitable per student transportation funding
- Provincial and board transportation policies that enable the bussing of students long distances from their home communities
- Funding formulas for new schools that favour larger facilities and disincentivize boards to share facilities
- Lack of maintenance of older schools
- Reluctance of coterminous boards to share facilities

- Pandemic impacts, specifically remote learning
- Reluctance of school boards to enter into community use agreements

As part of this assignment, the successful Consultant will also **complete an inventory of existing school inventory within SDG**, as below. This information will help inform the solutions presented in the report.

- List of all active schools in SDG by board, complete with grades offered
- List of schools where daycare, before and after school care, office space, leased space, or adult learning is offered, including details
- 10 years of enrolment data for each school
- Facility condition index of each school
- Current capacity and utilization rates

Inquiries

Please refer inquiries to:

Mr. Timothy Simpson, Chief Administrative Officer

26 Pitt Street

Cornwall, Ontario K6J 3P2

Phone 613-932-1515 x 1202

Email tsimpson@sdgcounties.ca

Rejection of Proposals

The County reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals received as a result of this request and to cancel this solicitation at any time prior to the execution of a contract.

Incurring Costs

The County is not liable for any costs or expenses incurred by Consultants in the preparation or submission of their Proposals or for attendance at any meetings related to this Request for Proposal prior to the issuance of a contract.

Response Date

To be considered, Proposals **must be emailed** to the individual listed above and received on or before **Friday, February 26th at 1:00 p.m., marked 'Improving Rural Education in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry'**. Late submissions will not be accepted and will be returned to the sender unopened. **Due to the pandemic, Proposals will only be accepted electronically.**

Consultant Responsibilities

Each Proposal must be signed by the individual representative(s) of the Consultant who has contracting authority. That individual will be the sole point of contact regarding contractual matters.

Proposals

Proposals must be submitted electronically to Mr. Simpson as follows:

- 'Main Proposal' as a separate PDF attachment
- 'Financial Proposal - Appendix A' as a separate PDF attachment

The Main Proposal must include the following, and **be no longer than ten (10) pages in total length**:

- Two (2) professional references.
- An introduction detailing the Consultant's understanding of the project objectives and scope.
- A description of the Consultant's approach and details of the project.
- A summary of recent involvement with similar projects and the name, title, and telephone number of a reference for each of the projects listed - minimum 2.

The first ranked Proposal, having acceptable terms and conditions, will be recommended for award. If approved by County Council, the County will notify the successful Consultant in writing of the acceptance of its Proposal. The successful Consultant shall be bound to execute an agreement with the County within fourteen (14) days of being notified of approval.

Negotiations

If a Proposal does not precisely and/or entirely meet the requirements of this Request for Proposal, the County reserves the right to enter negotiations with the selected Consultant(s) to arrive at a mutually satisfactory arrangement with respect to any modifications to the Proposal.

Written Agreement

A written Agreement shall be executed by the successful Consultant and the County. The final terms and conditions of the Agreement will be negotiated between the successful Consultant and the County, and will include such items as payment schedule, scheduling of work, milestones, and completion date.

Standard Terms and Conditions

While undertaking any work, the selected Consultant must adhere to all relevant Provincial/Federal legislation/regulations.

The Consultant shall not transfer responsibility to meet their contractual obligations to a third party without the consent, in writing, from the County.

The Consultant shall respect the confidentiality of the information collected or made available during the assignment.

The Consultant must certify that they have appropriate Health & Safety Policies in place and follow the requirements of Ontario Regulation 297/13 made under the OHSA.

The lowest cost, or any Proposal may not necessarily be accepted. The County reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals. The County, when evaluating the Proposals, will take into consideration related experience, proposed methodology, managerial capabilities, qualifications of the Consultant, and cost. In addition, the County reserves the following rights:

- To waive irregularities and informalities at its discretion.
- To negotiate or discuss the technical and financial content of the successful Proposal.

Insurance/Indemnity Requirements

The successful bidder shall indemnify and hold United Counties of Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry, its employees, agents, etc., harmless from and against any liability, loss, claims, demands, costs and expenses, including reasonable legal fees, occasioned wholly or in part by any negligence or acts or omissions whether willful or otherwise by the bidder, its agents, officers, employees or other persons for whom the bidder is legally responsible.

Prior to commencing any work hereunder, the successful Consultant must provide proof of insurance satisfactory to the County.

A valid Ontario WSIB Clearance Certificate covering all employees of the Consultant is required prior to the commencement of any work.

Clarification or Inquiries

Any clarifications or inquiries shall be sought from the County prior to the submission of the Proposal, no later than **Friday, February 19th, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.** Answers to all inquiries will be provided via written addendum to all Consultants who have received a copy of the documents. The response will be provided in a manner which will not identify who has requested the clarification. Amendments/clarifications/addendums to this request for Proposal shall take precedence over the portion which has been amended and shall be considered part of the contract.

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, *Ontarians With Disabilities Act*

It is the Consultant's responsibility to ensure that they and all sub-consultants hired under this contract are in full compliance with Section 7 of Ontario Regulation 191/11, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* as may be amended from time to time.

Treatment of Information

The information submitted in response to this request for Proposal will be treated in accordance with the relevant provisions of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)*. The information collected will be used solely for the purposes stated in this request.

If the Consultant believes that any part of its bid reveals any trade secret, intellectual property, scientific, technical, commercial, financial or labour relations information or any other similar secret right of information belonging to the Bidder, the information **must be clearly marked as 'Confidential'**.

Any requests for access to submissions will be subject to a formal review based on MFIPPA requirements prior to the release of third-party information.

Project Upset Amount

The upset amount for this project shall be \$60,000 exclusive of HST. Proposals exceeding this amount will not be considered.

Part B: Proposal Evaluation

Validity of Proposal

The Proposal shall remain valid for a term of sixty (60) days after the Proposal due date.

Evaluation Criteria

Each consultant shall submit a Proposal which outlines their understanding of the Scope of Work of the project and shall address the criteria noted below. The County may elect to interview one or more of the respondents to further evaluate their experience, ability or understanding of the proposed work. Proposals will be reviewed and scored based on a consensus approach and a recommendation made to County Council based on the Proposal which attains the highest score from the evaluation criteria listed below.

County Council has final authority for the award of the work.

Proposals will be evaluated as follows:

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Category	Points Available
Consultant Experience	15
Consultant Qualifications	5
Proposed Methodology	50
Financial (Envelope 2)	30
Total Available Points	100

Consultant Experience with similar projects (15 points)

The Consultant shall provide a summary of similar projects which they have completed including references for the work.

Consultant Qualifications (5 points)

The Consultant will provide curriculum vitae for key team members who will be working on this project, demonstrating the necessary experience to successfully complete the work.

Proposed Methodology (50 points)

The Consultant will describe in detail their proposed approach to this assignment.

Financial Proposal (30 points)

In a separate attachment, clearly labeled 'Financial Proposal – Appendix A', the Consultant shall provide the total contract price to complete the work, HST shown separately. Full points will be awarded to the lowest cost Proposal meeting all project requirements and other Proposals will be awarded points based on the following formula:

$$1 - \frac{(nx - n1)}{n1} \times 30$$

Where:

n_x is the dollar value of the proposed fee

n_1 is the dollar value of the lowest proposed fee

APPENDIX A: FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

Proposal Price

The undersigned agrees to complete the project as detailed in the submitted Proposal for the following price:

Total Price to Complete the Project (Excluding HST)

\$ _____

Name of Firm

Address

Name and Signature of Person Signing for the Firm

Position

Phone

Email